A REVIEW OF THE STATE OF THE BRITISH NATION.

Thursday, May 22. 1707.

I Promis'd to enter a little into the other Parts of the Importation Bill with Respect to *Scotland*, that every impartial Reader may see, what it is *England, for it was* England *when this was a doing*, suffers by a firm, nice and inviolable Adherence of the Union.

The granting a Drawback on foreign Goods imported into *England*, has been of old by Experience found proper for the Encouragement of Trade, and to prompt the sending great Quantities of the Growth of our own Colonies abroad, principally Sugar and Tobacco.

Before the Union, this Encouragement was allow'd on Goods exported to *Scotland*, as well as to any other foreign Country—And as it was principally Tobacco's that were so exported, the Duties drawn back were very considerable, every Pound Weight having 5*d.* at least allow'd to the Exporter.

Upon the Prospect of this Union, the Merchants pour their Tobacco's into *Scotland* at an unusual and incredible Rate from *Bristol*, *Leverpool*, *Whitehaven*, and *London*, and this so considerably, that I am told by a Merchant in *Dumfreis*, that there have been 4000 Hogsheads brought from *England* into that Town only.

'Tis for the Sake of those People, who have not made themselves Masters of this Case, and for those Gentlemen, who living in the Country remote from these things, cannot so soon be informed, that I am thus particular; and those that know them more perfectly, will easily excuse me the being so plain in laying it down—The Design of exporting all this Tobacco is evident, not that *Scotland* wants in a common Demand of Trade such a Quantity of Tobacco, or can consume it in any reasonable Time; but that

that there being a free Intercourſe of Trade by the Treaty agreed on between the Kingdoms, the ſame Tobacco may be imported again into the *South* of *Britain*, where the Price will pay in the ſame Proportion as before; and ſo the QUEEN's Pocket is only pick'd of 5*d. per* Pound, and they are where they were before; as to Oaths, Conſcience of Frauds, breaking Bonds, cheating the QUEEN, and ſuch Trifles as thoſe, I ſhall not at all enquire into them here, any more than the Gentlemen concern'd have conſulted them in the Deſign of this Branch of Commerce; *but this is the Matter of Fact.*

The long Repetition of this Hiſtorical Part of the Matter has this, *I hope reaſonable Account* to be given ſir, *viz.* 1. To ſhow the World, what juſt Reaſon the QUEEN and the Parliament had to bring in ſome Bill, if poſſible, to prevent ſo notorious a Fraud, which I think is nothing at all leſs than Theft in the higheſt Degree, being an open premeditated Robbery; and I ſee no Body pretends to defend it.

2. In thus ſhowing the Neceſſity there was of finding out, if poſſible, ſome Remedy for ſo notorious an Evil, the generous Regard, both Her Majeſty and the *H* of *P—s* had for the ſacred Stipulations of the Union, will be ſtill more conſpicuous, I ſay generous, rather than juſt for this Reaſon.

It was not only juſt in punctually obſerving and religiouſly guarding the expreſs Terms of the Articles; but it was a generous Regard to them, in that Her Majeſty choſe rather to drop an Act ſo abundantly needful, and ſee her Revenues expos'd to the intollerable Ravages of this *Raparee-Trade*, I have now mention'd; than ſo much as tread upon the Edges of the Treaty, than ſo much as give the leaſt Shadow of Fear to her Subjects of the *North*, or Ground to their Enemies to ſuggeſt, that the Treaty of Union ſhould ever ſuffer the leaſt Invaſion on their Part.

Abundance of pleaſing Reflections might be made from this Obſervation.

1. How happy a Turn have theſe Nations felt in the Mannagement of the publick Affairs, and the Adminiſtration of the Government; that from a Time when all the Advantages poſſible were taken, and the Laws ſtrain'd to all Extremities againſt the People, both in their Freedoms and in their Purſes; We are arriv'd to a Day, when the Government chooſes to ſuffer Loſſes and Injuries almoſt unſufferable, rather than make Uſe even of that Power, which the Laws really have given them, or might give them, which would in the leaſt ſeem grinding or oppreſſive.

2. How manifeſt a Difference there is to be ſeen between arbitrary tyrannical Princes, and free, juſt and limitted Monarchies; the one opens the Veins of the Common-Wealth, and bleeds the ſuffering Subjects on every Occaſion, whether to gratifie Pride, Avarice, Ambition, or any baſer Luſt, and make themſelves Judges of the Occaſion; the other make the Good, the Eaſe, the Riches and Proſperity of their People, their Pleaſure, their Study, and their ſupream Deſign, and on all Occaſions wave their juſt Advantages to give Way to this great End, the common Good.

3. Here the groundleſs Suggeſtions of theſe jealous People are expos'd, who have been ſo amuſed, and have amuſed their Neighbours with Fears and Apprehenſions, of what Uſage they ſhould meet with in the *North*, when they had ſurrendred, as they vainly and abſurdly call'd it, their Freedom and Independency. Here you ſee, Gentlemen, the Uſage you are likely to meet with; you ſee the QUEEN and the *Engliſh* Nobility, to whom you fancy'd your ſelves intirely ſubjected, ſo careful of you, ſo tender of the Agreements made with you, that even without the Help of your 16 Lords, and before they come to have a Vote, every *Engliſh* Nobleman, that is a Friend to their own Country's Liberties, is a Guard to yours; nay, the juſt Concern for their own Laws, for the QUEEN's Advantage, for the puniſhing Exorbitances and Frauds, cannot prevail with them ſo much as to claſh with your Intereſt, or make the leaſt Stop that may ſeem hard to you.

Here you ſee the Commons of *England*, with whom you are incorporated, and of whom ſuch frightful things have been ſaid to you, how they would cruſh you, how they would oppreſs you; even theſe Commons, tho' as it were ruffled with Clamours, and worry'd

worry'd with Petitions of the Merchants, that like the Widdow in the Goſpel, gave them no Reſt; nay, tho' taken at all Advantages with the moſt ſpecious Pretences for the Demand, and a viſible Juſtice to Trade; taken at the End of a Seſſion, with the thinneſt Houſe that ever ſat on ſo material an Affair, being not above 80 Members; yet all this could not prevail to bring on the Bill about the Drawbacks and Importations, but with large and particular Exceptions for the Subjects of *Scotland*, which as I ſaid before, appear'd an abſolute and unpaſſable Boundary to all their Actions.

I would fain have the Gentlemen, that have ſo often pretended to ſuſpect the Integrity of their Neighbours, in making and in keeping the Treaty of the Union, reflect ſeriouſly upon theſe things, and certainly their own Conſciences muſt ſmite them for having wrong'd their own Charity, and the Reputation of the beſt Government in the World; of which I ſhall not fail to take all Opportunities to remind them.

MISCELLANEA.

I Broke off my Anſwer to a Letter in the laſt *Miſcellanea* for Want of Room, wherein the Author offers to prove, that Bankrupts muſt have given in falſe Accounts to their Creditors, becauſe they are ſeen ſoon after Diſcharge, opening their Shops again, and with great Stocks beginning a new Trade, whereas it is not viſible how they came by thoſe Stocks.

I think, this is rather a Suggeſtion than an Objection, and I am ſorry to ſay, ſavours of a Want of Charity, or elſe looks like what I have often complain'd of, *viz.* A Willingneſs that the Bankrupt ſhould as once unfortunate for ever remain ſo; but as I hope, the Gentleman, who ſent me that Letter, has no ſuch Principle, I do not make it a Charge on any, but ſuch who make themſelves guilty.

For a Bankrupt, who being once ruin'd, but deliver'd by the Law to endeavour, by falling again into Trade, to recover his Fortune, and find Bread for his Family, I think, is a natural Conſequence of his former Circumſtances, and the only true and honeſt Pretence that ever I heard made for the Act——For to what Purpoſe is he deliver'd? To *beg*, or *ſtarve*, or *fly* his Country? theſe were none of the Ends of it; the Occaſion was to ſet up again, to try again to build on the Foundation of old Experience, and if poſſible by new Induſtry, new Meaſures, new Helps, and new Succeſs, retrieve the Shipwrack of their Fortunes.

As to the Funds they begin upon, for there lies the Objection, I know, there are many who have Friends, who give or lend, or give Credit to a Man, when he is once got free, that would never ſet their Hand to help him out; and this may be the Caſe of many a Man, that having gotten the Liberty granted by this Act to begin to appear in the World again, and it would be very hard to conclude by theſe outward Appearances, that they have perjur'd themſelves, only becauſe we do not know where or from Fund they are furniſh'd.

Now I ſhall propoſe a *Medium* for this too, tho' it be ſomething hard upon the Perſon, yet I would have the Creditors of ſuch a Bankrupt go to him, and ask him ſeriouſly from what Fund and by what Means he has obtain'd a Stock to begin again, ſince it was but ſo lately that he had been ſtrip't naked upon Oath?——Now, tho' it may be hard, I ſay to a Man to diſcover, who are his Friends, who gives him Credit, and what Credit he has given him; and ſome of the Creditors may maliciouſly do him ſome Prejudice that Way;

Yet I cannot but think, any Bankrupt will frankly inform them; and unleſs he ſees a plain Deſign againſt him in it, give a frank Diſcovery to them of his Affairs, ſo far as may clear up their Scruples on that Head, and clear up his own Reputation to them; in which Caſe it would be very barbarous for Creditors to make an ill Uſe of the Freedom, he uſes on that Account, to prevent his having Credit, or leſſen the Kindneſs of his Friends.

Now,

Now, when any Bankrupt is thus calmly, and on Promiſe of Secrecy deſir'd by his Creditors to ſatisfie them, how and by what means he comes to be able to make ſuch an Appearance in the World, and ſhall refuſe to give them Satisfaction on that Head, without ſome very good Reaſon to be given for that Refuſal, I ſhall with the Objector frankly own, there lies Room for a Suſpicion upon ſuch a Man, and he ought to expect it.

I would therefore recommend it to all thoſe Gentlemen, that have begun the World again, and who may think themſelves pointed at in this Letter, *for I profeſs I point at no Body, nor do I ſo much as gueſs who is meant by it*; I would recommend it, I ſay, to them to offer upon all Occaſions a free Diſcovery to any of their Creditors, who may deſire it, of the Foundations they go upon, and thereby take from them all poſſible Objection; and if that will not ſatisfie them, they are clear of any reaſonable Suſpicions to all the World.

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